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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06/30/09

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ARTICLES:

- (1) Lack of unity in LDP; Aso denies replacement of three party executives

ASAHI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
June 30, 2009

Set off by turmoil over Aso's plan to change the three party executive officers, a rift has opened up even among senior Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members and faction chairmen who have so far supported Prime Minister Aso. Former prime minister Abe and others suggest that Prime Minister Aso should try to turn the tables by exercising the right of personnel management, but Diet Affairs

Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima, former chief cabinet secretary Nobutaka Machimura and others are negative about Aso's use of the right. While Aso is rapidly losing support of his party, the LDP itself is also coming apart.

Members supportive of Aso and against change of executive lineup:
Give priority to unity, resigned to become opposition members

Former secretary general Bunmei Ibuki admonished Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura, the prime minister's right hand, in the Diet Building yesterday for the recent turmoil over replacement of the party executive lineup, saying: "Don't make a fuss." Appearing on a TV program on June 27, Ibuki also expressed his opposition to the idea of changing the lineup, remarking: "With Diet dissolution just around the corner, the party must move ahead with a whole-party stance without changing the executive lineup."

Ibuki, Machimura - chairman of the Machimura faction - and Oshima, all of whom are eight-term senior officials, have supported the straying Aso administration. Despite falling public support ratings for the Aso administration, they continued to say: "It is the prime minister who should dissolve the Diet," distinguishing themselves from anti-Aso forces, such as former secretary general Hidenao Nakagawa.

However, Aso's idea of replacing the three party executive officers was a total surprise to them. If the three top executives, including Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda, are replaced, not only the three officers but also members in the factions which the three belong to will surely harbor dissatisfaction with Aso. In such a case, some

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might begin to call for changing the prime minister. Moreover, ideas are floating of installing to the post of secretary general Election Strategy Committee Vice Chairman Yoshihide Suga, a close aide to the prime minister, and Labor, Health and Welfare Minister Masuzoe, who has a high profile but has not enough experience as a House of Councillors member.

On June 25, when Aso indicated the possibility of changing the party executive lineup during a speech at the Japan Press Club on June 25, Machimura made a phone call to Aso, in which he said: "Meeting only Mr. Suga is undesirable. You should not replace Secretary General Hosoda. If that is the case, you might lose our faction's confidence in you."

This remark is to indicate that if the prime minister replaces Hosoda, who belongs to the Machimura faction, the largest faction might stop supporting Aso. Machimura further told Aso: "It is the prime minister who decides on when to dissolve the Lower House, but I think it would be better to dissolve the Diet at an early date."

If Aso continues to delay the dissolution, moves to "dump Aso" might become full-scale, and the LDP may be torn apart. A senior Machimura faction member commented: "While being resigned to fall from power, we may have to face the election." This lawmaker has already kept in mind an "opposition party LDP," based on the judgment that it would be better to quickly hold the election, rather than to see the party disintegrate in midair.

Anti-Aso members against change of executive lineup: Call for moving up presidential election

Former secretary general Hidenao Nakagawa thrust a demand with Aso for his resignation in protest of his strategy of early Diet dissolution. On his homepage, Nakagawa revealed his eagerness to dump Aso, noting: "Dissolution despite dismal public support ratings is tantamount to 'dissolution with desperation and assault.' I absolutely oppose an early Diet dissolution aimed to contain moves to oust Aso."

Early this year, Nakagawa revealed his anti-Aso stance, but at that time, junior members refrained from joining him while just watching the situation. But this time, Aso has already said that the dissolution is in the not-so-distant future," Nakagawa believes that junior members will have no choice but to rise to action.

In actuality, "Aso-dumping moves" never stop, as seen from the activity by Lower House member Koichiro Shimizu, one of the so-called Koizumi children, to gather signatures for holding a confidence vote in the prime minister. A person close to Nakagawa said: "There are few people who think it would be desire to hold an election under Prime Minister Aso."

The view is gaining influence that Diet dissolution will be delayed to sometime after the Tokyo assembly election as Aso remains unable to replace the three party executive officers. A lawmaker close to Nakagawa said: "The next reaction will come after the Tokyo assembly election." Anti-Aso forces are aiming to prevent "dissolution with desperation" until the current Diet session adjourns on July 28 and to hold a party presidential election after the end of the session.

To front-load the party presidential election, approval from a majority (216) of all Diet members and prefectural federation

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representatives is necessary as long as the prime minister does not decide to step down. Lower House member Taku Yamamoto of the Machimura faction announced he has already collected signatures from 108 party members. He is resolved to step up efforts to gather signatures before the end of the Diet session.

Even so, if Aso suddenly decides to dissolve the Lower House, there will be no time for a presidential election. A mid-ranking Diet member said: "In such a case, I will carry out my own election campaign, separately from Prime Minister Aso's campaign."

Now that the LDP is going deeper into confusion, more than 20 Koizumi children met at a Japanese restaurant near the Diet Building last night. Former prime minister Koizumi also attended the gathering and encouraged them by saying: "Don't rely on the party. I would like you to work out (a strategy) by yourself and fight the election independently."

Pro-Aso supportive of change of executive lineup: Driven into corner with strategy of dissolution disrupted

Election Strategy Committee Vice Chairman Suga deplored the present state of the LDP in a speech yesterday: "In the LDP, calls are growing for an election under someone other than Prime Minister Aso. That is really lamentable."

Although Suga is in his fourth term, he is viewed as the closest aide to the prime minister. He has been in the forefront since he was appointed as internal affairs and communications minister in the Abe cabinet. His influence has been increasing remarkably.

Now that former finance minister Shoichi Nakagawa and former internal affairs and communications minister Kunio Hatoyama, both of whom are friends of Aso, have left his cabinet, Suga is playing a key role, along with former prime minister Abe, in mapping out Aso's Diet dissolution strategy. Suga and Abe also succeeded in persuading Aso to decide to keep Nishikawa in the post of Japan Post president, although Aso was in favor of replacing Nishikawa. Many party members see Suga and others suddenly suggested the idea of replacing the top executive lineup in an attempt to increase their influence. The idea of "secretary general Suga" has also cropped up.

Not only anti-Aso forces but even factional chairmen and party executives who have supported unpopular Prime Minister Aso have begun to voice opposition to the idea of changing the party executive lineup. Seeing their stance, an official who once served as secretary general said: "Their opposition probably is stemming from their sense of alarm that the post of secretary general might be assumed by a junior member, like Mr. Suga. Lawmakers close to Aso are still placing expectations on a "secretary general Suga." But one cabinet minister flatly said last night: "Mr. Abe and Mr. Suga have certainly lost in the game. The Aso LDP has been completely ended. He is already a lame-duck."

Once Aso's strategy on Diet dissolution and personnel changes collapses, Abe and Suga, who have given instructions on the

strategy, will unavoidably be driven into a corner.

(2) Gov. Nakaima denies he asked for 110-meter offshore relocation

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Abridged)
June 30, 2009

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The Okinawa prefectural assembly met yesterday to hold a question-and-answer session, with eight prefectural assembly members from the opposition parties taking the platform. In the session, Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima denied that he negotiated behind the scenes with then Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura over the offshore installation of an alternative facility for the U.S. military's Futenma airfield. "I have never asked the government to move it 110 meters," he stated.

This April Machimura told the Ryukyu Shimpo in an interview that the government should approve the Futenma replacement facility's offshore move within a range of 55 meters for possible changes to the Futenma relocation plan within the bounds of an environmental impact assessment. Machimura also revealed that in his behind-the-scenes negotiations with the governor, he was about to reach a settlement on revisions to the Futenma relocation plan within the limits of an environmental assessment. On this matter, a senior official of the prefectural government had explained that Okinawa Prefecture sought two-stage revisions (within a range of 110 meters) but failed to reach a settlement with the government.

Meanwhile, Nakaima, in his statement on the government's plan to carry out its environmental assessment, called on the government to conduct a multiple-year survey of dugongs. This survey, however, was left out of the government's preliminary report on its environmental assessment. In this respect, Kenji Chinen, director general of Okinawa Prefecture's cultural and environmental affairs department, indicated his view, saying: "If the prediction and assessment based on the results (of the environmental assessment) are appropriate, it can be taken as the same as having substantially conducted a multiple-year survey."

(3) Dugong discovery not described in prelim report on environmental assessment

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 31) (Abridged)
June 30, 2009

This April, the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an outlet in Okinawa Prefecture of the Defense Ministry, sent in a preliminary report to Okinawa Prefecture on its assessment of a potential impact on the environs of an alternative facility to be built for the U.S. military's Futenma airfield. This preliminary report, however, did not describe the discovery of a dugong in waters off the coast of Nago City's Henoko district, while it is described in the Environment Ministry's fact-finding report and in the Defense Ministry's environmental assessment plan, sources revealed yesterday.

What was not described in the Defense Ministry's preliminary report is the fact that a dugong wandered in the sea on March 7, 2005 from the offing of Ginoza through the offing of Henoko for 7 hours and 11 minutes. This fact is described in the Environment Ministry's report that outlined findings from its wide-area survey of dugongs and sea weed beds from 2001 through 2005. Furthermore, the Okinawa Defense Bureau's environmental assessment plan, which was sent in to Okinawa Prefecture in August 2007, describes it, citing data from the Environment Ministry report.

The Save the Dugong Campaign Center (SDCC) sent an open letter of inquiry to Okinawa Defense Bureau Director General Ro Manabe and

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Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito for their explanations.

(4) Japanese-version Nye Report needed

SANKEI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)
June 30, 2009

Keiko Chino, special reporter

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye, known to be well-versed in Japanese affairs, stated (on June 25) about Japan's Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs: "The opposition Democratic Party of Japan has expressed skeptical positions about the Japan-U.S. security alliance. (The current domestic political uncertainty and realignment) could cause friction in the alliance." The Sankei Shimbun reported this on June 27 as part of a dispatch from Washington.

Nye's concern was expected. I, too, held concern in a different sense on recent congressional confirmation testimony by Kurt Campbell, who has been nominated as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

Campbell did not pose any questions about the DPJ or Japan's political situation. Conversely, I sensed from Campbell's policies and his replies a deep knowledge about, trust in, and discretion for the Asia Pacific region, especially Japan.

In view of his predecessor, Christopher Hill, who failed in North Korea policy, I thought that Campbell was perfectly cut out for the post. But that is the very reason why I am concerned about Japan. Can Japan really draw on this opportunity?

The next general election is close at hand. If the results of opinion polls are true, a change of administration is also imminent.

Focused only on a possible change of government through the next general election, the ruling and opposition parties have almost completely forgotten to discuss their visions for and the modalities of the state. There have been almost no debates on foreign and security policies. Those matters were skipped in the recent party-heads debate. The DPJ's draft policies lack specifics as well.

What are the policies toward the Indian Ocean, piracy off Somalia, Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, and North Korea? If the continuity of foreign and security policies is disrupted because of a possible power shift, the United States' trust in Japan will also waver. Tangible and intangible losses from it will be immeasurable.

The concern expressed by Nye is probably only the tip of the iceberg. His concern can be paraphrased as public discontent with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and public anxiety over the DPJ. I believe this is the right time to consider a Japanese-version Armitage-Nye Report based on Nye's concern.

The so-called Nye report, which is officially titled "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership" was issued in October 2000 immediately before the presidential election. Ahead

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of an anticipated close race between the Democratic and Republican parties, a nonpartisan study group consisted of Republican Richard Armitage, Democratic Nye, and others sent out a message through the report that whichever wins the presidential race, U.S. security policy toward Japan will not change.

The Armitage report and "The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020," which is commonly called Armitage Report 2 now form the unwavering foundation of Japan-U.S. relations of the 21st century.

Elections are unpredictable. Even so, Japan as a mature nation needs to send the message that regardless of the results of the election, the foundation of the nation's security policy will remain

unchanged.

Nonpartisan discussions are indispensable to serve as the basis for security policy. Debates are underway in Japan. But in many cases, they seem to be unilateral or complacent debates strictly among like-minded members. It can be said that they have only a weak sense of being involved with security affairs.

For a Japanese-version Armitage-Nye report, debates across party lines and the process to formulate policies are essential, as in the United States. The question is whether there is the groundwork to support them?

Incidentally, the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management (MIGM) established by the late Konosuke Matsushita for nurturing Japanese leaders just celebrated its 30th anniversary. Of 237 individuals who completed the institute, 101 have entered politics, 70 joined the business world, and 39 education, research, or the media. My expectations for the groundwork grew as I listened to vibrant speeches and presentations by MIGM-trained opposition and ruling party lawmakers and students during the anniversary event.

(5) Simulation Report: No data suggesting alleged "deteriorating public safety," "increase in crimes by juveniles, foreigners," etc. - all media lies; Japan is still one of the safest countries in the world

SAPIO (Pages 12-14) (Full)
July 8, 2009

Koichi Hamai, professor at Graduate School of Law, Ryukoku University

When did people start claiming that the public safety situation in Japan is deteriorating? Certainly there are reports on vicious crimes in the newspapers and on TV every day. However, few people know anybody close to them who has been a victim of a vicious crime. Has the "myth of Japan's safety" disintegrated? We asked Koichi Hamai, who is an expert on crime statistics.

According to a survey conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2006, 84.3 percent of the people thought "Japan's public safety has deteriorated in the past 10 years." The mass media, politicians, and many learned persons invariably precede their statements with, "With crimes becoming more vicious recently..." on the assumption that the public safety situation has deteriorated. The "myth of Japan's safety" which every Japanese person used to believe in has now been replaced by the "myth of deteriorating public safety."

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This change came about as a result of two incidents - the subway sarin gas incident in 1995 and the Sakakibara incident of 1997.

The subway sarin gas incident brought home the fact that crime, which used to be "something that is surely happening somewhere, but has nothing to do with me," is something that can happen in daily life. It can probably be said that after this incident, the "myth of Japan's safety" fell apart. Two years later, the Sakakibara incident sparked people's apprehension about crimes, resulting in widespread talks about the increasingly younger age of criminals and the growing viciousness of crimes. Eventually, since the Okegawa stalker incident of 1999, the "theory of deteriorating public safety" became common wisdom.

The alleged evidence for this theory is the trend of cases of assault and infliction of bodily injury and the arrest rate. From this, it would seem that the number of cases is rising rapidly while the arrest rate has been declining. Taking this at face value, the impression is that the police have become unable to solve cases.

However, it is absurd to say that people could suddenly become violent from a certain point onward. The statistics are obviously irregular. The simple truth of the matter is that after the Okegawa case, the police have put much more effort into helping victims and have come to positively accept cases of violent crimes, so this has

pushed up the number of recognized cases.

In 2001, the random killing of children at the Ikeda elementary school connected with Osaka Kyoiku University made safety measures at schools a social problem. The kidnapping and murder of a schoolgirl on her way home from school in Nara in 2004 extended the scope of safety measures to encompass entire local communities. Through media reporting on this case, people came to share the perception that anybody can potentially become a victim of crimes.

Occurrence of murder in Japan is one-fifth that of the U.S.

A careful analysis of the available statistics shows that it could hardly be said that "public safety has deteriorated rapidly." The trend of figures on recognized cases of murder shows that murder has been on the decline consistently since the latter half of the 1950s. Furthermore, these figures include attempted murders, so the number of genuine "recognized cases of murder" is even less.

Demographic data on the causes of death for "number of deaths by homicide" and the number of children dying by homicide shows that objectively speaking, the number of deaths by homicide - including children - has been declining annually, even though there have been active anti-crime patrol activities to deal with suspicious characters on the assumption that the safety of children is at risk.

It is true that 600 people are murdered in Japan each year, which is an average of almost two people each day. Somebody gets killed somewhere on any given day. However, this is an exceptionally small number compared to the other advanced countries. According to the "White Paper on Crime" (2008 edition), Japan ranks lowest among the five advanced countries (France, Germany, UK, the U.S., Japan) in terms of the occurrence of murders per 100,000 people, far below the other countries. In the 2006 survey, the occurrence rate in Japan was 1.1, with 2.6 for the UK, 3.0 for Germany, and 3.2 for France.

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The figure for the United States was 5.7, which was five times that of Japan. Even in terms of the ratio of victims of violent crimes, Japan was overwhelmingly low. However, such figures have never been cited when discussing public safety problems in Japan.

Age of criminals not lower, but higher

When talking about the worsening public safety situation, people always claim that the age of juvenile delinquents is becoming lower, while crimes are becoming more vicious. However, there are no statistics to support such a claim.

In terms of the age of arrested murder suspects, statistics show that the number of persons arrested has continued to decline since the 1960s and that the main reason for the decline is the drop in the number of arrested young people in their teens and 20s. The number of suspects in this age bracket declined sharply from 1960 to 1970 and has remained flat since then. It is obvious that these figures contradict the mass media's fuss about the increase in juvenile delinquency and increasing viciousness of crimes.

As for the younger age of juvenile delinquents, the so-called "delinquency curve" statistics show a completely opposite trend. These statistics shows the year of birth of delinquents aged 12 to 20 who were arrested and taken into custody for offenses. The peak of the age of delinquency tends to be higher the more recently a young person was born. This means that the age of juvenile delinquency is becoming higher, not lower.

Therefore, the age of criminals is not becoming lower and crimes have not become more vicious, and the current trend is expected to continue into the future. The reason for this trend is the low birth rate and the aging society.

From the point of view of developmental criminology, since the number of energetic youth more prone to commit crimes is declining, and the number of older people less likely to commit offenses is on the rise, the overall trend in criminal activities is that the

occurrence of crimes will be reduced.

Along with juvenile delinquents, foreigners are also cited as culprits for the deteriorating public safety situation.

The report issued by the Koizumi cabinet's "Ministerial Council on Crime Prevention" in 2003 called for controlling crimes by juveniles and foreigners in order to restore public safety in Japan. The reasoning was: "The massive influx of foreigners has resulted in the degeneration of Japanese values and morals" and "The dysfunction of family and local communities has resulted in diminished morals among children."

What is the situation, statistically speaking? The number of crimes by foreigners is indeed on the rise, but overall, they are mostly minor offenses, such as violation of the Immigration Law and theft. Furthermore, in terms of the involvement of Japanese (including permanent resident foreigners) and foreigners in robberies, the proportion of foreigners among vicious criminals is very small, and there is no basis for saying that this proportion is growing.

Of course this does not mean that Japan can be optimistic regarding the issue of crimes by foreigners. There is no denying that the police need to take special measures and this is indeed an important

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matter, but this is another issue.

"Theatrical reporting" making one passing case seem a constant phenomenon

An overview of the crime statistics in Japan shows that there is nothing to suggest that the public safety situation is deteriorating. Why, then, are people worried about deteriorating public safety?

I conducted a nationwide survey in 2006. To the question: "Do you think there has been an increase in crimes in the past two years?" the respondents were asked to answer both "in Japan as a whole" and "in your local community." While about 50 percent answered that "crimes have increased significantly" for Japan as a whole, the figure was only about 4 percent for the local community. Most respondents felt that "public safety in my community has not deteriorated particularly, but the situation is deteriorating somewhere else in Japan."

One reason for this phenomenon is media reporting. The Cabinet Office's 2006 survey mentioned earlier showed that the sources of information on public safety and crimes are: number one - TV, radio, 95.5 percent; and number two - newspapers, 81.1 percent, which are way ahead of number three - conversation with family and friends; 38.4 percent. This means that people's perception that public safety is deteriorating has been affected significantly by the message sent out ceaselessly by the media that "crimes are increasing and becoming more vicious" and "the police alone are unable to deal with them."

The phenomenon in which there is a widespread impression that public safety is deteriorating based on a few isolated incidents, regardless of whether crimes are actually being committed, is called "moral panic." This process begins when the media starts issuing an onslaught of reports on similar incidents, sending out the message that "crimes are on the rise and are becoming more vicious" and that "the police are unreliable." On the other hand, when the culprit in the incident happens to be a juvenile, the media cry out about the "unfathomable darkness of his mind" and "moral degeneration." If the criminal happens to be a foreigner, then they stir up the sense of alarm that "they are coming after Japan." Specific incidents are not reported as special cases, but are taken up as the symbol of the society's abnormality as a whole.

However, if this were a sense of panic caused by a temporary spike in media reporting, it should subside with time and be forgotten by everyone eventually. However, the media have been dramatizing crimes and building public opinion on them. The audience, who become convinced, then turn their criticism to the government or

administrative authorities who seem to be doing nothing. As a result, the administrative authorities take some stopgap measures to be on the safe side in light of the criticism, and crimes are perceived as a constant phenomenon and become a permanent fixture. In other words, theatrical media reporting creates permanent social "myths" out of transient issues. This is also what happened with the "myth of deteriorating public safety."

The factors contributing to good public safety conditions in Japan up until now are that delinquency is normally resolved by age 20 and adults are less likely to commit crimes, and that social structures such as the employment system make the coexistence of small

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businesses possible. Deregulation and structural reforms have eliminated the good old Japanese tradition of "mutual help," and this has not only made it difficult to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents, but is also causing an increase in crimes by older people due to poverty and social isolation at present. We should think about what needs to be done to maintain good public safety conditions in Japan based on facts.

ZUMWALT